

REMARKS

The office action of March 4, 2009, has been carefully considered.

It is noted that claims 1, 3 and 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over EP 0781609 to Kramer in view of JP 05-161902 to Konose et al. and the patent to Langer et al.

Claims 5 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Kramer, Konose et al. and Langer et al., and further in view of the patent to Ginzburg.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims presently on file differ essentially and in an unobvious, highly advantageous manner from the constructions and methods disclosed in the references.

Turning now to the references, all of the references have been discussed at length in prior amendments and those comments are incorporated herein by reference. The following additional comments are provided.

The Konose et al. reference is argued by the Examiner as teaching the use of tandem stands. Applicant does not see where Konose et al. teach that the two stands are in fact tandem stands which are operated in tandem operation. Furthermore, there is no teaching in Konose et al. that their arrangement would result in lowering the extraction temperature of a heating furnace. Konose et al. clearly disclose that the slab is stopped once after rolling with the (first) mill 2 and successively with the (second) mill 3. When a slab is stopped after the first mill it is clearly not simultaneously operated in tandem operation with the second mill. There is no suggestion of these features by Konose et al., thus one skilled in the art would not find it obvious from this reference to use a two-high tandem rolling stand in Kramer for the purpose of improving temperature profile of the metal material.

Relative to Langer, the Examiner cites this reference as teaching using reversible tandem finishing stands for the purpose of minimizing the length of the mill and controlling the temperature of the metal strip. Applicant submits that it is not obvious to one skilled in the art to combine the tandem finishing stands of Langer with the tandem roughing stands of Kramer. Langer clearly teaches that rolling mills with tandem operation should only consist of two reversing finishing stands in combination with

one roughing stand, because the use of reversing stands arranged in direct succession involves the disadvantage that the roll diameters and the surface roughness of the rolls cannot be selected in dependence on the requirements of the operation preformed in each stand because the stands are similar. Therefore, neither Langer, nor the knowledge of one skilled in the art, suggests or gives any motivation to combine a tandem finishing stand according to Langer with a roughing stand operated in tandem operation, because this would lead to the disadvantages which Langer intends to avoid (see col. 1, lines 44-49 of Langer).

Thus, applicant submits that the combination argued by the Examiner is contrary to the objectives of the individual references and therefore would not be obvious.

Furthermore, the presently claimed invention recites that all of the stands of the finishing train and the roughing train roll simultaneously. Although Kramer discloses using all stand of a one stand roughing train and a one stand finishing train, this does not automatically also teach to even use all stands in tandem operation in case the roughing train as well as the finishing train comprises two stands in tandem configuration. This type of operation is not obvious because Langer clearly mentions the

drawbacks of having too many stands operating simultaneously.

Therefore, applicant once again submits that it is not obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the present invention to combine the references as suggested by the Examiner.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 1, 3 and 6-8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over a combination of the above-discussed references is overcome and should be withdrawn.

The patent to Ginzburg et al. has also been considered. Applicant submits that this reference adds nothing to the teachings of the previously discussed references so as to teach the present invention. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 5 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

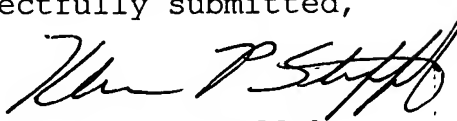
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Respectfully submitted,

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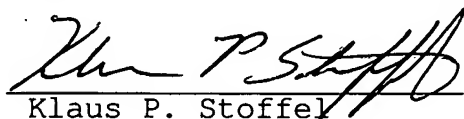
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